

Literacy development for language revitalization: Exploring literacy processing in the endangered language context

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The languages of the world are rapidly dying, but they are not going silently. Hundreds of language communities are fighting to preserve and revitalize their languages, many with inspiring success. One of the key factors of revitalization success is having a means to read and write the language (i.e., a writing system). Development of a writing system and subsequent orthographic rules is no small feat, and many communities struggle with difficult choices about representation (Cahill & Rice, 2014).

Research on literacy processing could help give guidance in this area.

Unfortunately, the majority of literacy research has been focused on native English speakers or ESL learners (Share, 2008). This lack of cross-linguistic research inhibits our understanding of literacy processing for endangered language speakers. Furthermore, literacy in the endangered language context can be more complex than L1 literacy due to the influences of majority languages and potential prior exposure to literacy in other languages, resulting in transference from the majority language. Due to these factors, it is also unclear how existing models of literacy and contemporary grapholinguistic models of writing systems (e.g., Meletis, 2020) might apply in this context.

To better shed a light on this issue and discuss how this topic is unique from other types of literacy development, the proposed paper will review how literacy processing is different in the endangered language context and explore ways this issue can be researched more thoroughly. More specifically, this paper will synthesize research on literacy and linguistics and relate concepts to the endangered language context, drawing on examples from specific languages.

Cahill, M. & Rice, K. (2014). *Developing Orthographies for Unwritten Languages*. SIL International.

Meletis, Dimitrios. (2020). *The Nature of Writing: A Theory of Grapholinguistics*. *Grapholinguistics and Its Applications*. Flexus Editions: Brest, France.

Share, D. L. (2008). On the Anglocentricities of current reading research and practice: The perils of overreliance on an “outlier” orthography. *Psychological Bulletin*, 134(4), 584–615. DOI: 10.1037/0033-2909.134.4.584.